



Parking Advisory Committee

Date: March 29, 2021

Time: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation

Minutes

In Attendance: Ali Carter, Daniel Amstutz, Adam Chapdelaine, Leland Stein, Phyllis Marshall, Mike Rademacher, Howard Muise, Corey Rateau, Jill Mirak, Darcy Devney, Loretta Mosca.

1. Greetings and introductions, ground rules for online meetings.

Daniel Amstutz read a set of prepared remarks explaining the procedures that the Committee would follow to hold a virtual meeting. Governor Baker signed an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic allowing virtual meetings, which suspended the usual Open Meeting Law requirement that a quorum of committee members be physically present in order to hold an official committee meeting. Amstutz confirmed the committee members in attendance for the meeting.

2. Approval of the minutes for the February 17, 2021 meeting.

Amstutz noted he did not have minutes completed for the February 17 meeting and this item will be deferred to the next meeting.

3. Vote on Select Board referral: Resident Parking Waiver on Whittemore Street.

Amstutz noted he had shared with the committee petitions he received from Loretta Mosca, owner of 26-28 Whittemore Street, in support of a permit to have residents of Whittemore Street be exempt from the 4-hour parking time limit that is in place on Whittemore Street. He also had shared a letter from Aram Hollman, 12 Whittemore Street, who is opposed to this request and noted he was writing on behalf of four other residents.

Amstutz shared a map from the Arlington Center Parking Study that was conducted in 2014 showing the existing parking regulations before meters were added and parking regulations were changed. The study

noted that Whittemore Street had no clear parking regulations. Amstutz next showed a map of properties on Whittemore Street highlighting residents/property owners supportive and opposed to Mosca's request. About a dozen properties front Whittemore Street. Five are supportive, based on Mosca's petitions; three are opposed, based on Hollman's letter; and the remaining properties have not registered support or opposition. Thus, the support for the request is not unanimous or in a majority.

Amstutz brought up several concerns with the request. He noted that allowing residents to park all day on the street would prevent the public to park on Whittemore Street and reduce turnover; it may encourage more residents to own cars and drive in an area that already has many different transportation options and limited parking; and the request is to use the public on-street parking spaces to deal with what is essentially a private parking issue. Darcy Devney said she was concerned about the precedent that may be set by this request, and that it was coming up at the time of other requests to loosen parking restrictions in East Arlington to deal with the inconvenience factor of tandem parking. She noted the goals of the Sustainable Transportation Plan are to encourage other transportation modes besides driving and this request would not support that planning. Corey Rateau added that Whittemore Street was included in the study because of complaints about business owners and employees parking on the street all day, leaving no spaces for residents. He said tandem parking was common in Arlington and it should be something a resident is aware of when purchasing or renting, to know in advance it will be a factor in the parking situation. Adam Chapdelaine said there were no simple solutions to this issue, but the committee and the Town should be open to continuing conversations on how to best structure the parking regulations given similar concerns have been raised elsewhere in town and continue to come up. Jill Mirak moved to recommend the Select Board take no action on this request. Rateau seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

4. Treasurer's Office updates: parking meter revenues and Parking Benefits District (PBD) financial information.

Phyllis Marshall presented on the FY2021 projected revenues and expenses. There is a shortfall of about \$326,000 between revenues and expenses, but this can be covered by the balance carried forward from prior years and current revenues. Some lease contracts will expire the next fiscal year and will need to be renegotiated but she expects the costs will be the same. The PBD line item of \$104,084 represents funding provided to the Arlington Center Sidewalk Project and the Inspire Gardens plantings in the Center. Chapdelaine noted the COVID-19 relief funding from the federal government may be able to be used to make up

for lost revenues from the meters. Mirak asked for clarification about the recommendation to Town Meeting on how to spend money from the PBD next year. Chapdelaine noted the committee had recommended last meeting on spending \$20,000 for plantings in the Center, and this had been approved by the Finance Committee. This also includes covering the usual annual expenses. It is possible there may be a Special Town Meeting in the fall to add other expenses based on updated revenue information. Ali Carter noted some other expenses related to maintenance of the Broadway Plaza don't make sense to include because the Plaza will be under construction later in the year. Mirak said she would like to have a more robust discussion about the use of the PBD fund for other expenses at a future meeting. Carter clarified that the funds in the PBD are any additional monies above and beyond the annual expenses that are covered by parking revenues.

Marshall presented a second spreadsheet showing projected expenses and revenues for next fiscal year (FY2022). The expenses include the annual maintenance of the meters and leases, share of parking administration and enforcement, collections, technology, and what was recommended to pay from the PBD next fiscal year. She projected revenues both with and without effects from COVID-19 (if parking meter fines are suspended again). A table at the bottom shows other possible PBD expenditures that have been discussed but don't have funding associated with them, except for the seasonal plantings. Devney asked about the impact of parklets on parking revenue. Carter said it doesn't cost the Town anything per se to have the parklets up; the meters at the parking spaces being used for parklets would simply not be collecting revenue. The committee discussed previous use of funds and other priorities for the PBD.

5. PaybyPhone/mobile parking payment update.

Amstutz shared reports from PaybyPhone on the usage of their app for mobile parking payment. The data was pulled out today, March 29. There have been about 8,000 transactions processed; about 3,600 unique users of PaybyPhone in Arlington; and \$15,300 in parking revenue has been generated (not accounting for the per transaction fee). March now has the highest number of transactions. Like last month showed, PaybyPhone is being used mostly around the Broadway Plaza area, Russell Common Lot, and Railroad lot. Most parking sessions start at 8 am and level off over the day. He noted the traffic calendar is meant to show the busiest parts of the year, although a weekly basis may be more interesting. It is clear that people are taking advantage of the PaybyPhone app. Chapdelaine asked if there was a way to tell how much of the revenue or parking transactions are attributable to PaybyPhone. Marshall said she can try to gather that information for the next meeting. They would need to look at the credit card transactions to

make that calculation. Rateau noted from an enforcement perspective, the “cooling-off” period between when someone comes to the end of the time limit in a certain zone, and when they can park in that zone again, may be too short. They are noticing people effectively parking all day in certain locations by starting a new parking session.

6. Parklet update.

Carter said she has been doing intensive engagement with businesses to see if they want to continue parklets they had last year. They can reuse materials they received through the MassDOT Shared Streets grant program. She discussed parklets around town, including the Center, Arlington Heights, and East Arlington. Many businesses are interested and there are several possible parklets she is working on. Some businesses that may have sidewalk space or existing sidewalk dining want to do more than what they currently have. ACAC is interested in doing artwork on some of the barriers on the parklets. She expects the parklets will be installed starting April 15.

7. Any other business.

Mirak asked if the committee could be updated on parking revenues at least every other meeting.

Leland Stein asked if Fidelity House has an agreement or permit to hold an on-street parking spot for their bus on Compton Street. Rateau said he was not aware of an agreement. Marshall said she can check if they have a special permit.

Amstutz noted that Bluebikes bike share stations put into winter storage will be returning to Arlington shortly, which includes one on Mass Ave at Broadway, in the parking lane.

Amstutz also noted that other parking projects are on the horizon for the committee.

Rateau noted he will be on medical leave starting next week.

8. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 AM.